

City Pays Tribute to Heroes

**BY BOB SEIDENBERG - Evanston Review
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Veterans gather downtown every year at Fountain Square Plaza, where a memorial board stands, starkly listing the names of Evanston residents who lost their lives in past wars.

But unlike past years, the site now has a name - the Fountain Square Veterans Memorial Plaza - as the city moved to formally recognize the place that has long served as the center of veteran ceremonies.

On Tuesday, Veterans Day, Mayor Lorraine H. Morton unveiled a plaque bearing the new name.

"This day is our day, our way," she told the many assembled, "to express a city's gratitude for the courageous Evanston residents who sacrificed to make life more bearable for us all."

Allen "Bo" Price served as master of ceremonies for the dedication, which also featured a color guard and rifle squad from Northwestern University's Reserve Officer Training Corps unit.

Among the other speakers were U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-9th; state Rep. Julie Hamos, D-18th; Nancy Carver, past commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 42; and Patrick Sullivan, director of the Veterans Administration Medical Center of North Chicago.

Schakowsky said that just as the day honors those "who defend our country today, we must

fulfill our debt to those who defended us in the past."

She said those debts include an end to the waiting period some veterans now endure for medical care, full retirement and disability benefits, and the lowering of prescription drug costs.

"The men and women who fought for our freedom and liberty abroad should not have to fight their own government at home," she said, "for the veterans benefits to which they are entitled and to which they earned through their service."

Hamos said she is reminded of the high cost of service every day when she hears reports of casualties of American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

They include the National Guard members who never imagined they would be pressed into duty abroad, she said.

"I think it's important ... to realize the huge impact these wars have, the devastation they have on the families they (the soldiers) leave behind," Hamos said.

Price brought special attention to Bob Larson, a World War II veteran and member of Post 42, who worked for more than a year, lobbying officials to commemorate the site in honor of veterans.

Larson named Alderman Arthur B. Newman, 1st Ward, and others for the help they gave his cause.

"There is no place in the city that has commemorated a site in behalf of the veterans, so this is it," Larson said. "Fountain Square and the Veterans Memorial here have been so commingled, and this is a historic area - this is the heart of Evanston."

In addition, veterans sought to honor the names of those "Gold Star veterans" who fell in past wars, he said.

"These are all Evanston people," he said, referring to the names on the memorial board that stands along one wall of the newly named plaza.